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QUICKREAD Newsletter

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The following are the highlights from the QuickRead newsletter for February 21, 2001:
 Bringing Efficiency to IBM's Procurement Department
 All-cargo Airport Gets Customs Entry Status
 3PLs Often Skeptical About Trading Exchanges



Global Supply Chain Media — February 21, 2001

Bringing Efficiency to IBM's Procurement Department

"Turning IBM's purchasing department into a cohesive and efficient unit took some doing," says Bill Schaefer, IBM Global Services vice president of procurement services. Procurement personnel were largely administrative and often spent five hours a day on the phone just with administrative issues. Studies in the early '90s found that most were "generalists, just trying to support the purchasing transactions, not strong in the area of strategic sourcing, or in-depth knowledge of industry segments." (Source: "The Purchasing Machine," The Free Press)

All-cargo Airport Gets Customs Entry Status

The Greater Los Angeles/March Global Port all-cargo airport has been granted U.S. Customs Port of Entry status and now is a foreign trade zone. The 400-acre, all-cargo airport on the former March Air Force Base lies between L.A. and San Diego. (Source: March Global Port)

3PLs Often Skeptical About Trading Exchanges

While exchanges tout their ability to bring carriers' capacity and shippers' inventory together via the Internet in the near term, they are quick to note that any future success will rest on bringing in the 3PL component. Some 3PLs have cast a wary eye toward the exchanges and regard them as a new form of competition. Some just dismiss them as having a lot to say but little to show. Others choose to develop their own web-based exchanges for their customers. (Source: Food Logistics, Jan-Feb/01)

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Welch's E-strategy Designed to Cut Costs at GE

What hasn't really been stated clearly about the e-business strategy of Jack Welch, the soon-to-step-down CEO of GE, is this: When you get down to it, it is mainly just another way to drive costs out of the system by using the Internet to replace sales staff and back-office functions, as well as to automate transactions with customers and suppliers. (Source: eCompany, 3/01)

Demand Management Helps to Drive Fulfillment

Many industries and their supporting supply chains are becoming more customer-driven. Often lacking visibility into constantly changing customer demand patterns and ever-shorter product lifecycles, businesses run the risk of perpetuating supply and demand mismatches. Businesses that once could do little more than look to the past to plan for the future now have the technology to incorporate broader and richer forward-looking variables in overall demand planning. Businesses that utilize demand management, where demand is integrated with changing supply to drive supply-chain deployment and fulfillment programs, will find success. (Source: AMR Research, Boston)

Web-based WMS Can Provide Real-time Analysis

With a web-based warehouse management system, managers can react to information faster than in the past. For instance, such a system considers how much work is left and how many people are on the floor to determine how quickly the work can be finished. That type of advantage shouldn't be dismissed lightly. Companies get the value of bringing data together. With a web-based system, all the data is proximate, so you can do analytics you couldn't do before. (Source: Warehousing Management, Jan-Feb/01)

Kimberly-Clark Turns to Forecast Software

Kimberly-Clark is relying on collaborative forecast development software to help it and its partners compare demand products and to sort through specific stock codes. "This automated comparison will greatly increase supply-chain efficiency," says Larry Roth, senior consultant for the tissue, personal care and healthcare products manufacturer. "There are far too many codes to compare manually. What used to take more than two days of an employee's time each week will now take only 15 minutes." (Source: Electronic Commerce World, 2/01)

So Just What Does Inventory Turnover Mean?

How do you interpret inventory turnover? A recent report from Risk Management Association says: "High inventory turnover can indicate better liquidity or superior merchandising. Conversely, it can indicate a shortage of needed inventory for sales. Lower inventory turnover can indicate poor liquidity, possible overstocking, obsolescence, or in contrast to these negative interpretations, a planned inventory buildup in the case of materials shortages." (Source: Inventory Reduction Report, 2/01)

Know Your Customer - And Just What He Will Pay

Traditionally, merchants' prices were based upon how well they sized up their customers. Then, standardized, one-size-fits-all pricing came in. Now, new software promises to let retailers "know" the customers, know what they have bought before, what they paid for it, what sites they have visited, and how eager they are to get the lowest price. (Source: Business 2.0, 3/6/01)

Your Supply-chain Security Can Be Too Stringent

You must collaborate, and to do that, you must share information. Will it be secure? Will it be too secure? Supply-chain security coordinators must strike the proper balance between access and security, maximizing the value of the data they are protecting. Elevate security measures too high and the client loses the benefit of its own data; allow security to get too lax and the client loses control of its data. (Source: ID Systems, 3/01)

C-commerce Shares Info on Product Designs

The real value in collaborative product commerce, or c-commerce, stems from the fact that it involves the sharing of the one type of information that has been absent from previous collaboration initiatives - information about product designs. It can help you gain and maintain a competitive edge by giving you the ability to constantly build new and innovative products. (Source: Manufacturing Systems, 2/01)

E-learning May Continuously Train Your Staff

Firms have embraced the notion of "knowledge" as an asset. So, training is no longer treated only as a pick-me-up when fortunes are flagging, but as a necessity in order to keep up with the pack. Enthusiasts of online education, or e-learning, claim that corporate networks will move beyond the provision of courses 24 hours a day, and that they will become a growing, responsive repository of knowledge that continuously delivers to employees just what they need to know at any particular moment. But no e-learning program is close to this yet. (Source: The Economist, 2/17/01)

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